

MANUFACTURING EXTENSION PARTNERSHIP

Success Stories from the Field

Murdock Webbing Company, Inc.

Rhode Island Manufacturing Extension Services

RIMES Weaves Customized Web for Murdock Webbing Company

Client Profile:

Murdock Webbing Company, Inc. has been manufacturing webbing used in various military, recreational, and consumer applications for over 70 years. The Central Falls, Rhode Island-based company employs 175 people.

Situation:

Murdock Webbing wanted to refine their manufacturing process, and that is when Lean manufacturing came to mind. Lean Manufacturing is a comprehensive set of philosophies, guidelines, tools and techniques used to improve processes in manufacturing. "There was no specific challenge we faced other than the normal competition and our drive to improve our own processes," said Murdock Webbing's Chief Operating Officer, Greg Pilgrim. Murdock's managers wanted to find something that would fit with their needs and that is when they called on the Rhode Island Manufacturing Extension Services (RIMES), a NIST MEP network affiliate, for assistance.

Solution:

RIMES and Murdock Webbing worked together to find the best Lean strategies to fit with the company's business model. They recognized RIMES' 5S (Sort, Set in Order, Shine, Standardize, Sustain) and Six Sigma, a system of doing business with a focus on eliminating waste, improving quality, and reducing cost, would be the most natural fit. Through a partnership with and grant funding from the Rhode Island Economic Development Corporation, RIMES was able to provide Murdock Webbing with a customized system to improve its manufacturing processes. In order to get all of the employees involved, a steering committee was created. The committee consisted of a RIMES consultant and employees who met to discuss each process within the company and to develop fresh ideas. There were very specific areas in which Murdock Webbing wanted to see improvement, including a decrease in travel time within the building, an increase in product flow, and more efficient automation.

Murdock Webbing implemented 5S to eliminate the problem of finding space in its mills. "We have always struggled for space because of how the mill is broken up, so 5S allowed us to clear clutter, organize our space and look at our equipment," Pilgrim said. "We utilized the system in our inspection and cutting and blocking area. In doing all of this, we also eliminated different kinds of non-value added waste," Pilgrim added. Another area that saw significant improvement was in the barrier area of the mill. By reorganizing the department and moving it to a different room, the company eliminated an abundance of travel time through the mill's four different levels. Implementing RIMES' system also forced the company to look at how its equipment was operating. Murdock Webbing found the RIMES system so instrumental that it is developing presentations on its lean manufacturing philosophy to show its customers. As a result of Murdock's relationship with RIMES, employees are enthusiastic and morale has improved throughout the company.

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Results:

* Anticipated 30 to 40 percent reduction in conversion and inspection time.

Testimonial:

"RIMES has a vested interest not just in manufacturing but manufacturing in Rhode Island. I see utilizing RIMES as a consultant for a long time."

Greg Pilgrim, Chief Operating Officer